

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ICELAND'S RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

REF: CERP 0002

1. PART II - STRENGTH OF LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY. PEOPLES ALLIANCE, ICELAND'S THIRD LARGEST PARTY, IS POLITICAL VEHICLE OF MOST OF COUNTRY'S ESTIMATED 2000-2500 COMMUNISTS. PA REGULARLY POLLS 15-20 PERCENT OF NATIONAL VOTE, A FIGURE REPRESENTING MANY TIMES ACTUAL COMMUNIST NUMERICAL STRENGTH. PARTY IS, NONETHELESS, DEFINITELY COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED. IT IS STAUNCHLY ANTI-US AND ANTI-NATO, AND LEANS SLIGHTLY TOWARD MOSCOW, ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE CRITICAL OF SOVIETS AS WELL AS OTHER COMMUNIST STATES. AFTER THREE YEARS IN CABINET, PA IS NOW IN OPPOSITION FOLLOWING 1974 ELECTION, EVEN THOUGH PARTY ITSELF DID SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN IN 1971. THIS WEEK, PA IS HOLDING NATIONAL CONVENTION, BILLED AS LARGEST IN PARTY'S HISTORY WITH SOME 300 DELEGATES EXPECTED. MEETING IS ALSO MARKED BY WIDESPREAD REPORTS OF BITTER STRUGGLE FOR PA LEADERSHIP WHICH, FOR PAST SIX YEARS, HAS BEEN NOMINALLY HELD BY COMPROMISE CHOICE OF TWO REAL POWERS IN PARTY, FORMER CABINET MINISTERS LUDVIG JOSEPPSON AND MAGNUS KJARTANSSON.

2. PART IV

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PRIMARY AND MOST EFFECTIVE VEHICLE FOR COMMUNIST CULTURAL EX-

CHANGE EFFORTS CONTINUES (AS IN PAST YEARS) TO BE VISITS AND TOURS TO USSR BY ICELANDERS, USUALLY IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY. PARTICULAR ATTENTION APPEARS PAID TO LABOR UNION OFFICIALS AND STUDENTS, BUT INVITATIONS OCCASIONALLY GO ALSO TO WRITERS, THEATRICAL PEOPLE, COMPOSERS AND CRITICS. SUCH VISITORS ARE USUALLY PROGRAMMED TO COUNTERPARTS IN THEIR FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION. WHILE THE USSR IS MOST ACTIVE IN EXCHANGES WITH ICELAND, A SEEMINGLY SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM HAS BEEN A "WORKERS' RETREAT" ON THE BALTIC SEA IN EAST GERMANY WHICH HAS BEEN ATTENDED AGAIN THIS YEAR BY A NUMBER OF ICELANDIC SHOP FOREMEN AND LOCAL LABOR LEADERS.

IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION, THERE IS AGAIN THIS YEAR SOVIET TEACHER OF RUSSIAN AT UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND AND TWO "STUDENTS" ARE AT UNIVERSITY WHO ARE IN FACT SOVIET TRAINEE DIPLOMATS. EASTERN PERFORMING ARTISTS APPEAR FROM TIME TO TIME INCLUDING FIVE CZECHS WHO HAVE APPEARED WITH SYMPHONY OR OTHER LOCAL MUSICAL GROUPS. GROUP OF SEVEN SOVIET CULTURAL FIGURES VISITED IN CONNECTION WITH SOVIET EMBASSY'S COMMEMORATION OF 1917 REVOLUTION. WHILE SEVERAL OF PERFORMERS HAVE BEEN OF HIGH QUALITY, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THEY HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL IMPACT.

LOCAL GROUPS SUCH AS FRIENDSHIP SOCIETIES HAVE APPEARED LARGELY MORIBUND, ALTHOUGH PREVIOUSLY-UNKNOWN ICELANDIC-ALBANIAN SOCIETY PROMINENTLY ADVERTISED MEETING IN NOVEMBER. THE OFFICES OF THE ICELANDIC-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY CLOSED DOWN EARLY IN THE YEAR AND HAVE NOT REOPENED. SPECIAL BOOK EXHIBITS APPEARED IN NOVEMBER FROM EE COUNTRIES UNDER LOCAL AUSPICES BUT SPONSORED BY SOVIET AND EE MISSIONS. DIRECT CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THOSE MISSIONS CONTINUE LIMITED AND PROBABLY LARGELY INEFFECTIVE.

WHILE COMPARISON WITH U.S. PROGRAM IS DIFFICULT, IT APPEARS EE COUNTRIES HAVE SOME SUCCESS IN FIELDS WHICH ARE SIGNIFICANT FOR U.S. IN ICELAND, PARTICULARLY IN LABOR AND YOUTH AFFAIRS. IDEALISTIC RADICALISM OF ICELANDIC YOUTH PREDISPOSES THEM TO ANTI-US ATTITUDES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND MOST INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL PARTY IN ICELAND IN LABOR UNIONS IS COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED PEOPLES ALLIANCE. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO ALLOW MISSION TO DEVOTE MORE EFFORT TO THOSE FIELDS WITHOUT SACRIFICING OTHER PRIORITY OBJECTIVES WOULD BE HELPFUL.

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